



© World Bank / Dana Smillie

# AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY: WHY IT MATTERS

## What's the goal here?

To ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

## Why?

A well-established energy system supports all sectors: from businesses, medicine and education to agriculture, infrastructure, communications and high-technology.

Access to electricity in poorer countries has begun to accelerate, energy

efficiency continues to improve, and renewable energy is making impressive gains. Nevertheless, more focused attention is needed to improve access to clean and safe cooking fuels and technologies for 3 billion people.

## I have access to electricity. Why should I care about this goal?

For many decades, fossil fuels such as coal, oil or gas have been major sources of electricity production, but

**7** AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



**3 billion**  
people  
lack access  
to clean  
cooking fuels,  
resulting in nearly  
**4 million**  
premature  
deaths  
each year

burning carbon fuels produces large amounts of greenhouse gases which cause climate change and have harmful impacts on people's well-being and the environment. This affects everyone, not just a few. Moreover, global electricity use is rising rapidly. In a nutshell, without a stable electricity supply, countries will not be able to power their economies.

### How many people are living without electricity?

Nearly 9 out of 10 people now have access to electricity, but reaching the unserved will require increased efforts. In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 573 million people still lacked access to electricity. Without electricity, women and girls have to spend hours fetching water, clinics cannot store vaccines for children, many schoolchildren cannot do homework at night, and people cannot run competitive businesses. The health and well-being of some 3 billion people are adversely impacted by the lack of clean cooking fuels, such as wood, charcoal, dung and coal, which causes indoor air pollution.

### What would it cost to switch to more sustainable energy?

The world needs to triple its investment in sustainable energy infrastructure per year, from around \$400 billion now to \$1.25 trillion by 2030. Regions with the greatest energy deficits—sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia—need our help to improve energy access. That includes pushing harder to find clean, efficient, and affordable alternatives to health-damaging cook stoves.

### What can we do to fix these issues?

Countries can accelerate the transition to an affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy system by investing in renewable energy resources, prioritizing energy efficient practices, and adopting clean energy technologies and infrastructure. Businesses can maintain and protect ecosystems to

be able to use and further develop hydropower sources of electricity and bioenergy, and commit to sourcing 100% of operational electricity needs from renewable sources.

Employers can reduce the internal demand for transport by prioritizing telecommunications and incentivize less energy intensive modes such as train travel over auto and air travel. Investors can invest more in sustainable energy services, bringing new technologies to the market quickly from a diverse supplier base.

You can save electricity by plugging appliances into a power strip and turning them off completely when not in use, including your computer. You can also bike, walk or take public transport to reduce carbon emissions.

To find out more about Goal #7 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**